UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL

SCONE AERODROME SAFETY INSPECTION

FEBRUARY 2019
SCONE AERODROME

AERODROME SAFETY INSPECTION

6 and 7 February 2019
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1 CERTIFICATION

Mr Tom Griffiths, Airports Plus Pty Ltd, conducted an Aerodrome Safety Inspection (ASI) of Scone Aerodrome in accordance with the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR)139.315 (4)(a) on 6 and 7 February 2019.

Mr Griffiths is approved by CASA under CASR 139.320 to conduct Aerodrome Safety Inspections; my CASA Approval Number is A014 (see Attachment 1).

I hereby certify:
- that the published aerodrome data is correct;
- that the aerodrome operating procedures need to be documented;
- that the Aerodrome Reporting Officer is competent; and
- that the aerodrome facilities and equipment will continue to meet the applicable standards when the identified recommendations are undertaken.

There was nothing found that would indicate that Scone Aerodrome is not suitable for the Air Transport Operations to continue.

Tom Griffiths
Director/CASA Approved Person (Approval No A014)
Airports Plus Pty Ltd
20 February 2019
2 INTRODUCTION

Airports Plus Pty Ltd was commissioned to carry out an Aerodrome Safety Inspection (ASI) of Scone Aerodrome by the Upper Hunter Shire Council (the aerodrome operator).

The Inspection was the ASI of Scone Aerodrome, as specified by CASR 139.315 (4) (a) and was required by Council because there were regular Charter operations with aircraft that have a capacity of greater than 9 passengers. The charter operations are associated with the business activities in the region. The inspection is not required by CASA as there are no Regular Public Transport services operating.

The Upper Hunter Shire Council has recently appointed a new Aerodrome Reporting Officer who has completed the Australian Airports Association on line ARO training.

In recent years there have been 3 Aerodrome Reporting Officers who have been trained and appointed by the Upper Hunter Regional Council who have subsequently resigned for a variety of personal reasons. In the last 12 months the Aerodrome Manager has had some serious health issues requiring extended leave; she has made a full recovery. Despite these setbacks, the Scone Aerodrome continues to be operated in a manner that is safe for aircraft operations due to the staff recruitment and development implemented by the Aerodrome Manager.

Scone Aerodrome is a Registered Aerodrome under CASR 139.265.

This Aerodrome Safety Inspection contains 10 Recommendations.

3 DETAILS OF THE AERODROME

3.1 Information Published in the AIP- ERSA
AIP-ERSA and Runway Distances Supplement dated 28 February 2019 and NOTAM C2/19 amending the declared distances were checked. Various other AIP documents were also checked and the date of each document is listed below.

3.1.1 Location
The aerodrome coordinates, published in ERSA, were correct.

3.1.2 Name and Address of the aerodrome operator
The aerodrome operator’s details and the telephone numbers published were correct.

3.1.3 Handling Services and Facilities
The information published was correct.

3.1.4 Passenger Facilities
The information published was correct.

3.1.5 Details of the movement area
The information published in ERSA for runway 11/29 was correct.

3.1.6 Details of runway distances available
The information published in the Runway Distance Supplement, and as amended by NOTAM C2/19 was current.
3.1.7 **Details of the aerodrome lighting**
Details of the aerodrome lighting published in ERSA was correct.

3.1.8 **Additional information**
The information published in ERSA appeared to be correct and current.

3.1.9 **Other comments**
The AIP – DAP Aerodrome Chart, dated 25 May 2017, was checked and was correct.

It would assist with location identification on the aerodrome if the taxiways were formally named and identified in the AIP publications. This would remove any chance of ambiguity between when reading NOTAMs, or when reporting on taxiway issues.

4 **AERODROME OPERATING PROCEDURES**

There were no Aerodrome Operating Procedures issued for Scone Aerodrome.

Council has suspended a project to document their procedures pending the issuing of the new CASR Part 139 and the Part 139 MOS.

4.1.1 **Recording of Aerodrome Inspections**
The serviceability inspections are being recorded on the recently introduced AVCRM electronic recording system. The checklist has been developed to be Scone specific.

At the conclusion of each inspection a copy is automatically forwarded to Council’s record system for storage in Trim. All alerts and NOTAMs are automatically forwarded to 5 addressees, including the Aerodrome Manager and the General manager.

The records indicate that the inspections are generally being completed each working day.

AVCRM is an internet based recording system with of-site data storage in a secure facility.

4.1.2 **Recording of NOTAM’s**
The NOTAM records are maintained within the AVCRM

There have been 12 NOTAM request submitted since June 2018. All the NOTAM requested were of a high quality.

4.1.3 **Recording of Aerodrome Works**
The records of any works performed on the aerodrome are maintained in the AVCRM recording system.

This system also creates work requests to allow the Aerodrome Manager to direct the ARO to undertake specific activities if required.

All works conducted during the year were reportedly conducted as Time Limited Works, without causing any reported delays to aircraft operations. The works parties
always contained the Aerodrome Reporting Officer who is based full time at the aerodrome.

4.1.4 Aerodrome Emergency Plan

There was no Aerodrome Emergency for Scone Aerodrome and one is not required for a registered aerodrome.

5 REPORTING OFFICER

5.1.1 Competency of Reporting Officers

There are 3 Aerodrome Reporting Officers appointed by Council.

A review of the inspection logs and the NOTAM indicted that the Reporting Officers are competent in performing those parts of their functions.

The recently appointed Reporting Officer has completed the on-line AAA ARO training program.

5.1.2 Names of the Reporting Officers

The current Reporting Officers are:

- Kate Brown (duty Aerodrome Reporting Officer);
- Leonie Dover (Saleyards Field Officer and Relief ARO); and
- Joanne McLoughlin (Aerodrome Manager)

5.1.3 Access to Standards

The Aerodrome Reporting Officers have ready access to the internet which provides access to all relevant legislation.

The AIP and the MOS Part 139 are available through AVCRM.

6 MOVEMENT AREA DETAILS

6.1 Runway 11/29

Runway 11/29 was measured at 1408 m long and 30 m wide. It is located in a runway strip that is 150 m wide and 1528 m long, with a marked 90 m wide graded section.

The runway surface consisted of a 7 mm sealed surface for about 100 m at each runway end and the remainder is a 15 mm asphalt surface. The end sections were sealed in about 1986, with the central asphalt constructed in about 2011.

The runway appears to have been constructed in or before the late 1960s, based on the aerodrome lighting facilities. At that time, it was common for about 100 m of each runway end to be constructed with fine crushed rock with a low plasticity index (low clay content) and then finished with a bitumen seal. The central section was then constructed using a gravel pavement material with a significant clay content and a plasticity index of 10 or greater. This material provided suitable strength for aircraft operations but could not tolerate being wet. As an unsealed pavement it would tolerate water as it was exposed to wind and sunshine and would dry out.

At some time, this section was sealed, thereby preventing any moisture in the pavement from evaporation by exposure to the elements. The moisture, combined with the clay content, often results in plastic failures (behaving not unlike plasticine).
This is consistent with the pavement material finding identified by Kamen Engineering in its report “Pavement Investigation, Assessment, Maintenance and Rehabilitation Scone Regional Airport”, dated 22 December 2017.

There was some minor rutting in the asphalt about 300 m from the RWY 29 Threshold, about 10 m south of the centreline. This appears to have been caused during construction.

There are many joints within the asphalt section that have now opened up due to shrinkage, and a number of cracks have appeared on the edges of the pavement, some have had weeds growing in them.

Approximately 500 m from the 29 Threshold there are a number of areas where the surface has been pushed up about 20 to 30 mm over an area with about a 5 m diameter; these bulges are known locally as gilgis. It is most likely that these gilgis have formed when water has entered the expansive underlying clay which has swollen, pushing the pavement up. At each gilgi site there is either a pavement crack or an open joint “upstream” of the swelling where water may have entered the pavement. As the sub-surface is a granular material with a high clay content it would not provide any protection against water penetration or clay expanding.

This indicates that the pavement material is at the end of its serviceable life and has deteriorated so that it cannot be relied upon to provide a serviceable pavement into the future. The pavement should either be replaced or strengthened by lime stabilisation, and the runway should be resurfaced with asphalt to provide a water proof wearing layer.

**The Kamen Engineering report should be implemented as soon as possible to ensure that the runway remains serviceable for many years to come.**

The moist expansive clay issue should be corrected by the installation of rubble filled drains along each side of the runway. Rubble filled drains at least 1 m deep will collect surface water and cut-off any sub-surface water keeping the pavement and its underlying clays dry.

The cracking in the pavement is now so extensive that it is unlikely that a crack sealing program will rectify the problems and provide a water proof surface. The larger cracks should be sealed to prevent the ends fretting off and producing FOD and any vegetation growing in the cracks should be removed.

Despite the above, the surface was found to be serviceable for aircraft operations.

The edges of the pavement were generally flush with the runway strip surface.

The graded area of the runway strip area had been mown regularly and provided a comfortable ride at about 65 kph.
Photo 1 – Typical open joint on Runway 11/29

Photo 2 – SW edge showing cracking

Photo 3 – Runway 11/29 crack patching

Photo 4 – Crack patching with extending cracks at the edge of a gilgi about 500 m from the Runway 29 threshold

Photo 5 – Typical Runway 11/29 gilgi

Photo 6 - Runway 11/29 edge of a gilgi

Photo 7 - Runway 11/29 pavement cracking around the edge of a gilgi

Photo 8 - Runway 11/29 centreline cracking
### Recommendation 1
The Kamen Engineering report “Pavement Investigation, Assessment, Maintenance and Rehabilitation Scone Regional Airport”, dated 22 December 2017, should be implemented as soon as possible.

### Recommendation 2
If it not possible to implement the Kamen Engineering report within 12 months, another solution should be developed with appropriate engineering advice to protect the pavement. One such treatment could be a 10 mm bitumen seal over the asphalt section of the runway.

### Recommendation 3
Seal all the large cracks to prevent the edges fretting and producing FOD penetrating into the pavement.

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### 6.2 Taxiways

### 6.3 Main Taxiway
The main taxiway provides access to the apron area from runway 11/29. It is 15 m wide. It has a bitumen seal surface that appears to be of a similar age as the runway ends. It was basically sound with minimal stone loss and minor cracking.

**The main taxiway should be resurfaced in about 5 years.** It could be resurfaced with a bitumen seal containing at least 10 mm aggregate.

The surface was found to be serviceable for aircraft operations.

### 6.4 Parallel Taxiway
This taxiway provides access to the hangers and to the Airpasture hangar. The taxiway has been permanently closed between the private hangars and Airpasture due to rough and uneven surface.

The sections of this taxiway that have been left in service taxiway provide the only access to Airpasture, which operates agricultural aircraft that can tolerate the below standard pavement, and the private hangars.

While the remaining sections now comply with the physical dimensions of a Code A taxiway, it is still uneven. It was noted that this taxiway is to be relocated as part of the redevelopment of the aerodrome.

### 6.5 Pays Taxiway
The Pays taxiway provides access from the apron area to the neighbouring property owned by Pays Aviation. It also provides access to the grass parking areas to the west and north of the wind indicator.

The taxiway is also used by Pays vehicles, including a heavy aviation fuel tanker.

The taxiway is a 7.5 m wide grass taxiway with the central 4 m sealed; it is marked with yellow cones spaced 7.5 m apart.

The seal surface is now severely cracked, with areas of total failure of the seal exposing the sub-grade pavement. The surface of these failed areas (each of about 1 m diameter) consisted of loose aggregate and crumbly bitumen, indicating severely
aged and oxidised bitumen. The failures have occurred through overloading an aged pavement.

As it was found, the pavement is not safe for aircraft due to the loose stones which might cause damage to propellers. Furthermore, if there is significant rain it will weaken the subgrade and cause pot holes to form.

This taxiway should be repaired by resealing, or by sweeping and close monitoring. If the original pavement was a gravel pavement an effective solution would be to remove the seal surface and revert to a gravel taxiway. This will, however, increase the maintenance requirement, especially as it appears to be used more as a roadway than as a taxiway.

![Photo 9 – Pays taxiway](image)

Note extensive cracking of oxidised/aged bitumen seal surface

![Photo 10 – Typical failed area on the deg of Pays taxiway](image)

**Recommendation 4** Ensure that the taxiway from the main apron to the grass parking areas and Pays Aviation is maintained in a serviceable condition, or close it.

6.6 Pays Gravel Taxiways
The gravel taxiways to Pays agricultural/firefighting operations area were in reasonable condition.

6.6.1 Other taxiways
The two private access taxiways that access the threshold area of runway 29 were in reasonable condition. There were provided by and are maintained by the owners of the neighbouring properties.

6.7 Aprons

6.7.1 Main Apron
The sealed RPT apron area in front of the Terminal Building and the other parking areas in front of the hangars and to the west of the RPT were in reasonable condition except for cracking around the edges of the pavement. This is probably a result of the drought and shrinkage of the sub-grade. There are also areas of shape loss, probably due to overloading from time to time.

The apron pavement consists of a number of sealed sections of varying ages.

This apron was addressed in some detail in the Kamen Engineering report, which also includes practical solutions. It was also noted that this apron will change in shape and use under the Master Plan development. As such, it may be prudent to
maintain the pavement with crack sealing program and urgent repairs to any failures that may occur if the Master Plan re-development is to occur in the near future.

If there are any significant delays in re-developing the aprons, the main apron should be reconstructed and resurfaced as recommended by Kamen Engineering.

**Photo 11 – Edge of the main apron pavement**

| Recommendation 5 | Implement the Master Plan re-development or the Kamen Engineering report recommendations within the next 12 months. In the interim, maintain the pavement with crack sealing and failure repairs as required. |

6.7.2 **Grass Apron in front of Aero Club**
This apron was in a reasonable condition.

6.7.3 **Grass Apron adjacent to the Wind Indicator**
The grass parking area adjacent to the Wind Indicator was in good condition. The tie down cables were secure.

6.8 **Aerodrome Lighting**
The airport lighting systems were inspected/activated as part of the Inspection. The lighting systems were found to be serviceable.

During the inspection the resistance to earth (Mega-Ohm) were measured for each of the primary aerodrome lighting circuits. It should be noted that the circuits were installed about 50 years ago and consist of direct buried armoured cables, with paper insulation; these cables deteriorate with time.

The Mega-Ohms measured were 0.0011 and 0.0012. The Australian Standards recommends that cable resistance to earth for a new installation should not be less than 2 Mega-Ohm.

The cables, therefore, cannot be considered as being reliable. It is probably only the drought that enables the runway lights to be consistent and any moisture in the ground may result in large earth leakages of power and unserviceable runway lights.

While the cable is in this deteriorated condition its continued operation should be reviewed. It may be safer to turn the lights off and only provide them for medical flights to minimise the usage of the cables. The provision of lights for medical flights should involve an Aerodrome Reporting Officer being in attendance to ensure that the lights continue to operate to a reasonable standard. With the lights on all night and no trained persons on-site Council will not be aware of any lighting failures.

The aerodrome lighting fittings and control circuits are also about 50 years old and are becoming difficult to maintain; the Pilot Activated Lighting Control unit has failed and the lights are now on all night. The spacings of the runway lights and the layouts of the thresholds/runway end lights do not comply with the current standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation 6</th>
<th>Replace the aerodrome lighting system with LED lights installed in compliance with the current CASA standards.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 7</td>
<td>Until the cables have been replaced, consider turning the aerodrome lights off and only providing them under supervision for medical flights only to ensure that the lights are operating.</td>
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</table>

There are no emergency lights or a stand-by generator.

6.9 Wind Direction Indicators and Signal Circle

6.9.1 Primary IWI

The Primary Wind Direction Indicator is located adjacent to the main apron and is serviceable. It has a well-maintained black circle surrounded by 15 white cones.

6.9.2 Signal Circle

The signal circle is adjacent to the Primary Wind Indicator, and is also well maintained. It is surrounded by 6 white cones.
6.9.3 **Runway 29 Wind Indicator**

The Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 139, regulation 139.185 (1) states “If a runway at a certified aerodrome is used in non-precision approach operations, the operator of the aerodrome must ensure that there is a wind direction indicator near the end or ends of the runway at which instrument non-precision approach operations can be conducted.” Regulation 139.285 also applies this regulation to registered aerodromes. Sub-regulation 139.185 (3) allows CASA to exempt an aerodrome operator from the above requirement if there is another means of providing the required wind information, such as an Automatic Weather Information Service broadcasting on an aviation frequency (AWIS).

Therefore, Council must provide either a new illuminated wind indicator (because the runway is available at night) at a specified location (southern side of the runway about 100 m upwind of the threshold) or provide an AWIS. To provide a new wind indicator in the specified location AND so that it is not an obstacle in the obstacle limitation surfaces (Transitional Surface) may require the purchase or lease of neighbouring land.

| Recommendation 8 | Install an illuminated wind indicator near the threshold of runway 29, in accordance with Civil Aviation Safety Regulation Part 139, regulations 139.185 and 139.285 or provide an AWIS. |

6.10 **Obstacle Limitation Surfaces**

The obstacle limitation surfaces are inspected as part of the daily serviceability inspection.

The approach, take-off and transitional surfaces were surveyed on 9 November 2018.

A bypass road is under construction, passing between Scone and the aerodrome, with a bridge being built over Liverpool St and Kingdon Ponds. This construction site has two large cranes, with one being on the runway centreline; they had not been erected when the OLS survey was completed on 9 November 2018.

There was no information available on the cranes and they had not been assessed to determine if they have any affect on aircraft operations. It was noted that they appear to be about the same height as the trees at the eastern end of the runway. However, one of these trees have been identified by survey as an obstacle in the approach surface and needs to be lopped or removed.

The crane on the centreline might infringe the approach surface and the VSS and should be investigated to determine if it is an obstacle. If it is an obstacle it should be referred to CASA and Airservices Australia for approval, and to determine any required mitigation measures.
6.11 Aerodrome Markers and Markings

6.11.1 Runway Markers and Markings
All the runway markings were in a good condition. The centrelines were 300 mm wide.

6.11.2 Taxiway Markers and Markings
The main taxiway markings are correct.
As advised last year, the gravel taxiways should have yellow gable markers installed on the edge of the graded section of the runway strip to mark the holding point/taxiway entrance.
All the natural surface private taxiways should be marked with yellow taxiway markers.

6.11.3 Apron Markings
The apron markings for parking aircraft larger than 5,700 Kg appeared to be reasonable, having been recently repainted. One position required a minor amendment to remove an obsolete line.
The grass aprons were correctly marked.

6.12 Use of Radios
The Reporting Officers use a hand-held radio to monitor radio broadcasts. They also each have an Aeronautical Radio Operator’s Certificate and, if necessary, will communicate with pilots.

6.13 Equipment used for dispersing birds and animals
There was a gas gun available for the dispersal of birds. It was not being used at the time of the inspection.
There were no reported bird strikes in the previous 12 months.
It would appear that on the absence of any reported wildlife strikes and the lack of formal and informal complaints received that there is no wildlife hazard at Scone.

6.14 Aerodrome Fencing

While the airport is fenced it is still not totally secure because the entry gate to Pays Air Services main area is open whenever Pays facilities are open and provides direct access onto the apron. This gate is also left open at other times allowing unauthorised persons to enter the airside when no-one else is there. The gate is sometimes closed outside of Pays business hours.

The northern boundary, east of the apron area is also unsecured in places due to the neighbours having access to the aerodrome. At one location, a hangar under construction had no barrier between the properties front fence and the airside. If the front gate is left open, there is no security on access to the airside. There was no barrier to prevent trespassers from entering Council’s property.

It was noted that the private taxiways from the neighbours at the eastern end of the aerodrome, abeam the threshold of runway 29, are secured with well-maintained gates.

**Recommendation 10** All boundary access points should be closed and maintained as secure gates to prevent unauthorised trespassing.

6.15 Other Services

The fuel facility is located adjacent to the main apron and is operated by Aero Refuellers. It was maintained in a neat and tidy condition.

7 FACILITIES THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH CURRENT CASA STANDARDS

Aerodrome Lighting
- installed in about 1970 in accordance with the standards contained in the Department of Civil Aviation’s Airways Engineering Instructions.

Apron Flood Lighting
- Installed in about 1970 in accordance with the standards contained in the Department of Civil Aviation’s Airways Engineering Instructions.

Parallel taxiway to runway 11 threshold
- Possibly constructed about 2010

Private taxiways to neighbouring properties
- Possibly constructed about 2010

There a no wind direction indicator located abeam the threshold of runway 29 to support the non-precision instrument approach procedure, as required Civil Aviation Regulation Part 139, regulations 139.185 and 139.295
- Possible installation of an Automatic Weather Information Service broadcasting on an aviation frequency by 2020.
# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1 Summary of the 2019 ASI Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>COMPLETED</th>
<th>ACTION OFFICER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  The Kamen Engineering report “Pavement Investigation, Assessment, Maintenance and Rehabilitation Scone Regional Airport”, dated 22 December 2017, should be implemented as soon as possible.</td>
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<td>2  If it not possible to implement the Kamen Engineering report within 12 months, another solution should be developed with appropriate engineering advice to protect the pavement. One such treatment could be a 10 mm bitumen seal over the asphalt section of the runway.</td>
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<td>3  Seal all the large cracks to prevent the edges fretting and producing FOD penetrating into the pavement.</td>
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<td>4  Ensure that the taxiway from the main apron to the grass parking areas and Pays Aviation is maintained in a serviceable condition, or close it.</td>
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<td>5  Implement the Master Plan re-development or the Kamen Engineering report recommendations within the next 12 months. In the interim, maintain the pavement with crack sealing and failure repairs as required.</td>
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<td>6  Replace the aerodrome lighting system with LED lights installed in compliance with the current CASA standards.</td>
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<td>8  Install an illuminated wind indicator near the threshold of runway 29, in accordance with Civil Aviation Safety Regulation Part 139, regulations 139.185 and 139.285 or provide an AWIS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9  Obtain the details on the cranes being used on the bridge construction site and determine their effect, if any, on aircraft operations. Also, the information should be provided to Airservices Australia to determine any effect on the published non-precision instrument procedures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 All boundary access points should be closed and maintained as secure gates to prevent unauthorised trespassing.</td>
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Annex 1 - Qualifications of T J Griffiths

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Higher Technician Certificate

Civil

awarded to

Thomas Joseph Griffiths

Principal

Head of Division

Secretary, Board of Technical Studies
9 September 2014

Mr Thomas Griffiths
(Approval Number A014) (ARN 574262)
41 Mt Runney Road
Mt Runney
Tasmania 7170

Dear Mr Griffiths,

Subject: Approval to Conduct Safety Inspections at Registered and Certain other Aerodromes

I refer to your application dated 6th September 2014 for approval under the provisions of Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) 139.320(2) to conduct aerodrome safety inspections at registered and certain other aerodromes. Your application has been assessed in accordance with the regulation and has been approved.

Under the provision of CASR 139.325(1), this approval remains in force for five (5) years from the date of issue. Your conduct of aerodrome safety inspections shall be under surveillance of officers of this Authority. This function and the day to day matters in relation to your approval will normally be performed on behalf of the Authority by me as the aerodrome inspector assigned to your approval.

If you have any queries regarding this approval or any other aerodrome related matters, please contact me on 02 8651 3040.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Mr Joe Hain
Aerodrome Inspector
CASA – Sydney Office

9th September 2014

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Adelaide • Brisbane • Canberra • Darwin • Melbourne • Perth • Sydney • Tamworth • Townsville
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